

Message Text

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63

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 181535Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2962

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 15300

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EFIN, GW

SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS ON OFFSET

REF: BONN 14326

1. WE SEE THE POSSIBILITY THAT CONTINUED ABSENCE OF GERMAN REACTION TO OUR PROPOSALS TO DISCUSS THE OFFSET PROBLEM COULD LULL THE GERMANS (INCLUDING THE CHANCELLOR) INTO THINKING THAT THEY COULD SLIP THROUGH WITHOUT ANY NEW AGREEMENT AT ALL. THEREFORE, WHILE AVOIDING PUBLIC CONTROVERSY ON THE SUBJECT, IT SEEMS DESIRABLE, IN THE FACE OF THE CHANCELLOR'S RELUCTANCE TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUE, FOR US TO PRESENT TO HIM IN A FIRM BUT LOW-KEY MANNER OUR ARGUMENTATION FOR THE EXISTENCE OF AN OFFSET WITHOUT ENTERING INTO NEGOTIATION OF WHAT THAT AGREEMENT SHOULD CONTAIN.

2. I UNDERSTAND THAT UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON WILL BE IN EUROPE IN MID-LATE OCTOBER AND IT WOULD NOT BE ILLOGICAL FOR HIM TO VISIT BONN TO DISCUSS A BROAD RANGE OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC QUESTIONS AT THAT TIME. WE MIGHT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH AN OCCASION TO OFFER THE CHANCELLOR THE OPPORTUNITY OF LISTENING TO OUR REASONING ON OFFSET, WITHOUT UNNECESSARILY DRAMATIZING THE ISSUE. SUCH DISCUSSION WOULD, HOWEVER, REMIND THE CHANCELLOR THAT THIS ISSUE IS NOT JUST A PASSING FANCY
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BUT ONE WHICH MUST BE FACED AND RESOLVED.

3. ONE POSSIBILITY IS FOR THE PRESIDENT AGAIN TO
WRITE THE CHANCELLOR, REFERRING TO VISIT OF ROBINSON ON
OTHER MATTERS, AND OFFERING TO HAVE UNDER SECRETARY
BRIEF CHANCELLOR OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE ON OUR VIEWS ON
THE OFFSET MATTER. I WOULD APPRECIATE SOME INDICATION
OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CURRENT THINKING ON OFFSET, AND ON
THE BEST TACTICS TO BE FOLLOWED, UPON WHICH THE EMBASSY
MIGHT COMMENT.
HILLENBRAND

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